

REMARKS

Claims 1-76 are before the Examiner, and have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hoyt et al (US 6,067,531A) in view of Whitesage (US 2002/001686A1).

Generally, Applicant's claims are directed toward systems and methods of both generating a contract, and once generated (i.e., signed), administrating the contract, for example, tracking obligations, using a single database. In both Applicant's specification and claims, the word "contract" means a signed contract. When referring to an unsigned contract, the words "draft contract" are used.

Hoyt's disclosure is limited to a negotiator/generation system and method. After the contract is signed/generated, the database is no longer used for any contract management or administration. According to Hoyt, once "executable" or signed, the status of the contract (or more correctly the draft contract or proposed contract) is changed to "Signed-External," or "Issued." (Column 16, lines 10-31.) Once this change in status is made, the signed or final draft contract goes "external," and Hoyt's database is no longer used for that contract.

Thus, Hoyt fails to disclose a database containing, or storing in a database, any of the contract fields required by independent claims 1, 12, 29, 43 and 54, or any of the contract data required by claims 54, 62, 69 and 76.

According to Whitesage, up to 12 databases must be used for any contract management aspect of the disclosed system. This is a significant departure from the single database required by Applicant's claims. Moreover, Whitesage does not disclose any of the draft contract elements of Applicant's claims.

Hoyt, Whitesage and Applicants address completely different aspects and approaches to contract generation of and/or management.

Applicant's respectfully submit that, for the above reasons, the combination of Hoyt and Whitesage fails to suggest Applicant's claimed invention.

Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Applicants invite the Examiner to telephone the undersigned attorney if there are any issues outstanding which have not been presented to the Examiner's satisfaction.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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